

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: MOSHE DAYAN TO BE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF NEW NESPAPER

BEGIN SUMMARY: RECENT MAARIV ARTICLE DISCLOSING PLANS FOR PUBLICATION LATER THIS YEAR OF NEW MORNING NEWSPAPER HEADED BY FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER MOSHE DAYAN HAS FUELED FRESH SPECULATION ABOUT DAYAN'S POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS. HIS APPEARANCE ON PRIMETIME TV PROGRAM FOR DISCUSSION OF MIDDLE EAST SITUATION THIS WEEK AND HIS UNEXPECTED PARTICIPATION IN PERES' BRIEFING FOR CODEL MORGAN (SEPTTEL) ALREADY HAVE PROVIDED HIM WITH FORUMS FOR ARTICULATING HIS TOUGH FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS. LOCAL OBSERVERS ARE DIVIDED AS TO WHETHER DAYAN MIGHT EVENTUALLY USE NEWSPAPER INITIATIVE AS LAUNCHING PAD FOR FORMATION OF CENTER-RIGHT POLITICAL FORCE CHALLENGING RABIN IN NEXT ELECTION.END SUMMARY

1. REVELATION OF MOSHE DAYAN'S DECISION TO BECOME EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF A NEW MORNING NEWSPAPER HAS SPARKED FRESH SPECULATION ABOUT DAYAN'S POLITICAL INTENTIONS. MAARIV SCORED MAJOR SCOOP BY BREAKING STORY ON JANUARY 4, BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACTUAL APPEARANCE OF NEW NEWSPAPER, AS YET UNNAMED, IS STILL

SOME MONTHS AWAY AT THE EARLIEST. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS WHICH HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE PRINCIPALS INVOLVED, DAYAN WILL SET THE GENERAL EDITORIAL LINE, WHILE HAGGAI ESHED, CURRENTLY WITH DAVAR AND ONE OF DAYAN'S OLD ASSOCIATES, WILL BECOME THE MANAGING EDITOR. THE REMAINDER OF THE STAFF IS STILL TO BE SELECTED.

2. FINANCING OF THE NEW NEWSPAPER IS SHROUDED IN MYSTERY. DAYAN AND ESHED HAVE REFUSED TO REVEAL THE NAMES OF THEIR BACKERS EXCEPT TO INDICATE THAT SPONSORSHIP IS AMERICAN AND UNAFFILIATED WITH ANY ISRAELI POLITICAL PARTY. AMONG NAMES WHICH HAVE BEEN MENTIONED ARE TWO AMERICAN/JEWISH BUSINESSMEN: A) ABRAHAM FEINBERG, HEAD OF THE INVESTORS GROUP WHICH CONTROLS SEVERAL ENTERPRISES IN ISRAEL INCLUDING THE HIGHLY LUCRATIVE COCA-COLA FRANCHISE; AND B) JULIUS STULMAN, WHO HAD ESTABLISHED THE "WORLD INSTITUTE" IN JERUSALEM--A THINK-TANK OPERATION NOW BEING CLOSED DOWN. AND THERE HAVE BEEN THE APPARENTLY INEVITABLE RUMORS OF CIA FINANCING.

3. POLITICIANS AND COMMENTATORS HAVE SPECULATED ON DAYAN'S OBJECTIVES IN AGREEING TO ENTER HIGHLY COMPETITIVE JOURNALISTIC FIELD. DAYAN HIMSELF HAS INSISTED THAT HE HAS NO INTENTION TO USE NEWSPAPER AS BASE FOR POLITICAL COMEBACK AND IS ONLY SEEKING FORUM FOR THE EXPRESSION OF HIS VIEWS. SOME LOCAL OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, HAVE SUGGESTED THAT NEW INITIATIVE MAY FORESHADOW EFFORT BY DAYAN TO PULL TOGETHER CENTER-RIGHT POLITICAL GROUPING TO CHALLENGE RABIN IN NEXT ELECTION BY PROVOKING SPLIT IN LABOR PARTY AND ESTABLISHING SEPARATE ELECTION LIST WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE PART OF RAFI, ELEMENTS OF LIKUD, AND MILITARY-POLITICAL PERSONALITIES SUCH AS ARIK SHARON AND EX-AIR FORCE CHIEF EZER WEIZMAN. OTHERS, HOWEVER, HAVE CHALLENGED THIS HYPOTHESIS BY CLAIMING THAT DAYAN'S TOUGH LINE ON NEGOTIATING ISSUES IS NOT ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM RABIN/PERES FOREIGN POLICY APPROACH (EXCEPT FOR HIS OPPOSITION TO SINAI II). FACT THAT DAYAN PARTICIPATED IN PERES' BRIEFING FOR CODEL MORGAN (SEPTTEL) IS REMARKABLE IN ITSELF AND WOULD GIVE SOME CREDENCE TO THIS VIEW.

4. WHATEVER DAYAN'S POLITICAL OBJECTIVES MAY BE, THERE IS BROAD CONSENSUS THAT NEW PAPER WILL INDEED GET OFF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GROUND BUT WILL CONFRONT HARD PROBLEMS IN CROSSED ISRAELI NEWS FIELD. THERE HAS BEEN NO NEW ISRAELI NEWSPAPER SINCE 1948, REFLECTING BOTH CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL RISK INVOLVED AND DIFFICULTY OF COMPETING WITH LARGE NUMBER OF EXISTING PAPERS. NEW PAPER IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE A MONEY LOSING PROPOSITION; IT ALSO WILL FACE STAFFING PROBLEM. SUCCESS OF NEW ENTERPRISE, IT IS BELIEVED, WILL DEPEND ON ABILITY OF PSONSORS TO ATTRACT IN-DEPTH AND EXPERIENCED STAFF FROM

OTHER NEWSPAPERS. INFLUENCE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY WHICH
ADDITIONAL NEWSPAPER CAN HAVE ALSO SEEMS QUITE LIMITED.

5. COMMENT: IT IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT WHETHER DAYAN
INDEED WILL TRY TO USE NEW NEWSPAPER AS LAUNCHING PAD
FOR AN EVENTUAL POLITICAL COMEBACK. SINCE LEAVING THE LAST
MEIR GOVERNMENT IN JUNE 1974, HE HAS BEEN WRITING
HIS MEMOIRS AND MAKING PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN ISRAEL AND
ABROAD. RECENTLY HE HAS APPEARED ON PRIMETIME TV PUBLIC
AFFAIRS PROGRAM AND, AS NOTED ABOVE, AT CODEL MORGAN
BRIEFING. THE AGRANAT COMMISSION'S INVESTIGATION INTO
THE SHORTCOMINGS PRECEDING AND IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF
THE OCTOBER WAR (75 TEL AVIV 0728) CLEARED HIM OF
RESPONSIBILITY IN A FORMAL SENSE, BUT HIS PUBLIC STANDING
HAS NEVER RECOVERED. THE SHARP DECLINE IN HIS
INFLUENCE IN THE LABOR PARTY SINCE THEN WAS DRAMATICALLY
REVEALED IN THE VERY LIMITED BACKING HE RECEIVED FOR HIS
STAND IN OPPOSITION TO SINAI II. AT THE LEAST, THE NEW
NEWSPAPER WILL GIVE HIM AN OUTLET FOR HIS VIEWS AND ENERGIES;
IN THE UNPREDICTABLE WORLD OF ISRAELI POLITICS, HIS LONGER-TERM
POLITICAL OBJECTIVES MUST REMAIN AN OPEN QUESTION.
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